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NSC BRIEFING

30 October 1960

CUBA

- I. The Castro regime is continuing to strengthen its identification with Communism and to expand its relations with the Sino-Soviet bloc.
- A. Cuban diplomats abroad are <sup>apparently</sup> being recalled for screening and possible replacement <sup>by</sup> <sup>considered</sup> persons willing to promote the Communist position on Cuban and international issues. ~~are evidently considered the most reliable.~~ Several officials in Mexico, Brazil, and Peru already have returned home.
- B. The ten-man economic mission, headed by "Che" Guevara, left Cuba on 21 October to negotiate with Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Communist China, North Korea, and East Germany on Cuba's commercial exchange with them in 1961.
- C. Agreement on a Cuban-Rumanian trade and technical assistance pact and the establishment of diplomatic relations was reached in Havana on 25 October. Indications are that Bucharest will furnish additional bloc assistance to the Cuban petroleum industry.
- D. Cuba has agreed to establish early diplomatic relations with North Vietnam. [REDACTED]
- II. Soviet vessels carrying bloc military equipment--including small arms, machine guns, anti-aircraft artillery, <sup>and possibly aircraft--</sup> ~~and tanks~~ are continuing to arrive in Cuba and more are expected.
- A. These Soviet shipments are, of course, in addition to the weapons inherited from Batista's 25,000-man army and to the purchases Castro made from Belgium immediately after he took over. (Castro bought 25,000 rifles from Belgium.)

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- C. Although a large portion of the arms equipment is probably intended for the growing militia force, which may now have as many as 200,000 members, we think the quantity of arms Castro is getting is excessive for Cuba's internal needs.
- D. The continuing shipments of Bloc weapons could permit Cuba to release its Western-made arms to pro-Castro revolutionaries elsewhere in the hemisphere.

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